



CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY  
**FULLERTON**

Human Resources

Guide to Effective  
Management Personnel Plan (MPP)  
Performance Evaluations

March 2013

# Table of Contents

<b>MPP Performance Evaluation - Overview .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>MPP Performance Evaluation – Process Steps .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Tips for Preparing Evaluations .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Common Rating Problems .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Tips for Creating Goals .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Tips for Discussing Performance Evaluations .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Tips for Providing Constructive Feedback .....</b>	<b>9</b>

## **MPP Performance Evaluation – Overview**

---

Regular performance feedback provides an opportunity to demonstrate how individual effort contributes to the accomplishment of organizational goals and objectives. It also provides a framework for professional development and recognition of the quality and quantity of contributions during the evaluation period.

### **Successful Performance Management**

- Is an ongoing and continuous process involving interactive and open communication between the evaluator and the employee.
- Fosters individual accountability for results and encourages increasingly higher levels of individual performance.
- Provides benchmarks by which evaluators and employees can measure accomplishments throughout the year.
- Serves as a mechanism for ensuring the accomplishment of goals that are related to the mission and success of the University.

### **Well Written Performance Evaluations**

- Provide a tool to measure individual progress.
- Are an effective means of developing and communicating goals for the upcoming year and a framework for communicating expectations.
- Provide recognition for positive work performance and individual accomplishments.
- May be used as the basis to making salary decisions.
- Provide an opportunity for the evaluator to mentor and coach an employee.

### **Frequency of Evaluation**

ALL MPP's must be evaluated at **six months** of service, **one year** of service and, thereafter, **at least once a year** as part of the annual evaluation process. (Section 42722 of Article 2.2 of Title 5 of the California Code of Regulations, bold added for emphasis).

## ***MPP Performance Evaluation Process Steps***

---

The following are the general steps in conducting evaluations.

- Step 1 Solicit input from the employee. Request that the employee complete *the Management Personnel Plan Employee Self-Evaluation and Accomplishment Statement* form available in eForms. Provide the employee adequate time to prepare the input.
- Step 2 Consider the input provided by the employee and prepare a draft performance evaluation.
- Step 3 Once a “draft” evaluation has been prepared, discuss it with the next higher level of management and make changes as necessary. Sign the “Evaluator” line on the form and forward to the next higher level of management to sign as the “Appropriate Administrator”. Additional review beyond the “Appropriate Administrator” level is at the discretion of each Vice President.
- Step 4 Schedule a time to meet with the employee to discuss the evaluation.
- Step 5 Meet with the employee and discuss the evaluation. Ask the employee to sign the evaluation. If an employee declines to sign the form, inform the employee that his/her signature does not indicate agreement with the content of the performance evaluation, only that he/she has received the evaluation. If the employee still refuses to sign, indicate this to be the case in the section designated for the employee’s signature by writing “Employee reviewed the evaluation and refused to sign”. This statement should be initialed and dated by the evaluator.
- Step 6 Provide the employee with a copy of the completed evaluation.
- Step 7 Forward a copy of the completed evaluation to Human Resources to be placed in the employee’s official personnel file.

## ***Tips for Preparing Evaluations***

---

During the year and prior to the performance evaluation meeting, the evaluator should Communicate, Document and Share, Review, and Solicit information concerning the employee's performance as described below:

**Communicate** - Regular communication, coaching, and feedback during the year will reduce or eliminate tension and anxiety about the performance evaluation on the part of both the evaluator and the employee. Positive and negative feedback is much more effective when given in a timely manner. An employee should not be surprised by any of the information contained in the performance evaluation since the evaluator should have previously discussed all performance related issues throughout the year.

**Document and Share** - During the review period, the evaluator should collect and record significant, job-related incidents that pertain to each performance factor or goal and share these with the employee at the time they occur. This provides an objective basis for ongoing assessment. Documentation gathered should be accurate and specific, both positive and negative, including the context in which the incidents occurred as well as the date they occurred. It may be helpful to distinguish between *events* and *perceptions*, each of which may be helpful in understanding, improving, and recognizing the quality of an individual's performance. Events are behaviors and/or results that have been directly observed by you or are otherwise known to you. Perceptions may be your own or come to you from others in the workplace and may be evidenced in the form of written and/or verbal customer feedback. An example of an "event" would be, "I observed you making an extra effort to make graduation go smoothly by encouraging your employees to participate and providing clear expectations of what they could do to present the best possible image of the University to parents and other visitors." An example of a "perception" would be, "I have heard from some of the customers that you are not responsive in following-up with them – the perception is that you focus on your own priorities rather than those of your customers."

**Review** - Periodic discussion with the employee about roles, responsibilities, and priorities, can help to eliminate misunderstandings between the evaluator and the employee regarding performance expectations.

**Solicit** – To help reduce anxiety and create a positive environment for enhancing performance, the evaluator should ask the employee to submit written input regarding his/her performance, including accomplishments relating to goals from the previous year and possible goals for the upcoming year. The employee should not be asked to write their own performance evaluation; they should be given the opportunity to provide their perspective and an opportunity to illustrate what progress was made toward the goals that were established at the beginning of the evaluation period. Employees can provide this input via the *Management Personnel Plan Employee Self-Evaluation and Accomplishment Statement* found on eForms.

## ***Common Rating Problems***

---

The following common pitfalls in evaluating the performance of others should be avoided.

**Lack of Clarity and Agreement in Standards** - The position description and the performance criteria should be available and clearly understood by the evaluator and the employee.

**Insufficient Evidence** - It is nearly impossible to recall an entire year's worth of performance from memory alone. Recording significant and critical incidents of both a positive and negative nature will provide the information needed to communicate the rationale for the rating(s).

**Excessive Strictness or Leniency** - The tendency to be optimistic or pessimistic may influence the incidents documented and the emphasis placed on them. Some evaluators say that "no one is perfect" and deliver very tough, strict evaluations. Others fear offending employees or feel that high ratings will motivate the employee and are overly positive in the review. A wide variety of documented incidents across all performance criteria should provide an excellent base for an annual assessment of performance.

**Halo Effect** - It is easy to allow the stellar performance in one or more criteria to influence the ratings in the other criteria. To avoid this rating error, evaluators should review each criterion on its own merit and have documentation to support each rating.

**Horns Effect** – This is the opposite of Halo Effect, where an evaluator allows poor performance in one or more performance factors to influence the ratings in the other criteria.

**Central Tendency** - Playing it safe and giving everyone a middle of the road rating also does everyone a disservice. Careful reading and consistent application of the criteria and comparison to documented behaviors will help produce objective ratings.

**Contrast** - Comparing one employee's performance to that of another instead of using objective performance standards and evaluating accomplishments in relation to the individual challenges and requirements of a particular position.

**Similar to Me** - Evaluators may tend to give employees who are perceived to be like them higher ratings than those who are not. Diversity factors come into play, such as race, age, gender, culture, and educational level. Evaluators should be aware of this possibility and focus on actual job performance and visible results.

**Recent Effect** - The performance evaluation rating should reflect the entire review period. A recent positive or negative event should not unduly influence the evaluation.

## ***Tips for Creating Goals***

---

For management employees, it is especially important that goals be linked to the accomplishment of department/division goals and the overall mission and goals of the University. Ideally, the organizational planning, goal setting, and assessment that began at the highest levels of the organization permeate through divisional/departamental goals to become individual goals. In this way, every manager's performance is linked to the University's goals.

- Established goals should be used as a tool to rate the employee's overall performance.
- The number of goals established should be realistic for the period covered.
- Goals should be stated in such a way that progress toward their completion is measurable.
- Established goals should be relevant to the work performed and to the short-term and long-term priorities of the organization and should be the focal point of regular progress discussions during the upcoming review period.

The *SMART* model can be used to develop goals. *SMART* goals are:

**S**pecific statements that allow a way to  
**M**easure progress toward the goal. *SMART* goals are  
**A**chievable. *SMART* goals are linked to and  
**R**elevant to the work of the position, to department/division & University goals. They are  
**T**ime-bound, with dates set for achievement of the goals or progress toward the goals.

Example of a *SMART* goal:

"Develop and implement campuswide procedures for the processing of requests. Finalize written procedures by May and provide training sessions June 1-August 30."

In addition to following the *SMART* model, effective goals focus on outcomes and results and may be used to measure performance on established MPP Performance Factors.

The following is an example relating to the *SMART* goal above:

<b>MPP Performance Factor</b>	<b>Possible Outcome</b>
▪ Conceptual Skills	▪ Provided a comprehensive briefing on the purpose for and use of the new request process
▪ Interpersonal Skills	▪ Worked effectively with managers across campus to implement the new request process
▪ Technical Skills	▪ Performed analysis and troubleshooting to implement the new request process

## ***Tips for Discussing Performance Evaluations***

---

Performance Management is one of the most important roles of a leader. Evaluators are encouraged to provide affirmation and guidance, as well as clarify expectations for the coming year. It is important to be clear about the purpose of the discussion before beginning the conversation. The following tips may be helpful:

**Utilize the Written Form as a Guide** - The evaluator should discuss areas in which the employee has performed well along with areas in which improved performance may be possible. It is important to ensure the employee takes ownership of his/her performance and is committed to goals for the next review period. Similarly, the evaluator should be clear regarding what support he/she will provide to ensure the employee's success.

**Be Prepared** - It is important to schedule the time and place of the discussion well in advance of the discussion so that you will have ample opportunity to prepare. It is especially important to schedule adequate meeting time, to allow time for discussion without interruption. It is also important to conduct the discussions in a private setting where you will be able to talk openly without concern of being overheard. It is important to think about what you wish to discuss in advance so your discussion will stay on track. You may want to make a few notes before your meeting.

**Be Open and Receptive** - One of the goals of performance evaluation is to align goals and expectations with actual performance. For this to occur, it is important for the evaluator to communicate what is expected of the employee. This includes how accomplishments will be measured (i.e. quality, quantity, timeliness) and what factors have influenced performance (i.e. unexpected staffing decreases, new regulatory requirements). The annual performance evaluation is a global discussion of overall performance as it was evidenced during the year. Communicate specifics, listen, and collaboratively plan for the future.

**Demonstrate Respect and Dignity** - It is important to demonstrate respect for the employee throughout the process. Listening carefully, being perceptive beyond what is said, and seeking clarification, will demonstrate your interest in understanding what the employee is saying and can help you in your role as a supervisor and mentor. Avoid argument. Sometimes an individual's resistance to assimilate constructive feedback can be due to his or her deep desire to do well and be recognized for what has been accomplished. It may be helpful to recognize the mutual goals of improving performance and focusing on opportunities for professional development. Be careful not to concentrate too closely on minor issues or to become too highly critical on any particular item unless that item is essential to the successful performance of the job. Concentrate on "what" is done not "how" it was done.



## ***Tips for Providing Constructive Feedback***

---

Here are some guidelines on giving feedback.

- Be honest. Demonstrate respect for the person without glossing over negative feedback or being vague.
- Prepare, even practice, difficult statements ahead of time.
- Make comments as descriptive as possible, not purely evaluative. For example, “I’ve observed you several times working with the clerical staff members and have noticed that you do not always take the time to understand and fully answer their concerns. It is important to treat all members of the University community with respect and to understand and support their roles in accomplishing our mission” would be more effective than, “You don’t treat clerical staff members with respect.”
- Describe behaviors and actions, rather than global impressions. *Be specific.* Rather than, “I’m not very happy with the quality of your work” say, “We discussed revising the format and content of the quarterly activity report last June, yet the reports continue to be much the same.”
- Make specific suggestions, not general ones. Include both positive and negative observations. Instead of “You need to treat the staff members with more respect, you often treat them like they are just getting in the way” say, “It seems like you are very committed to staying on task. This quality allows you to get a lot done during the day. However, I have noticed that the staff have questions and concerns that arise throughout the day and you are not available to them. I’d like you to improve your skills as a manager in this regard. For instance, if you are not fully able to address a staff member’s concerns as they arise, let the person know that you are interested in fully understanding the issue but that you are not able to discuss it at that moment. Let them know when you will be available and schedule a firm time to meet with them.”
- Maintain a pleasant expression and eye contact with the employee. Appropriate amounts of direct eye contact convey confidence and sincerity.
- Maintain an open, somewhat informal posture; pay attention to body language, and send a nonverbal message of approachability.
- Beware of your own personal biases, attitudes, and beliefs. For example, an employee’s personal appearance or ideologies may not be consistent with the tastes or ideologies of the evaluator, but if they are completely unrelated to the employee’s performance, these differences should not affect the evaluator’s feedback.
- Be considerate of the receiver’s feelings, trust level, tolerance limits, and self-esteem. Don’t press on if emotions are strong. In difficult evaluation discussions, it may be necessary to stop the discussion and reschedule it to clear the air and allow time for emotions to subside.